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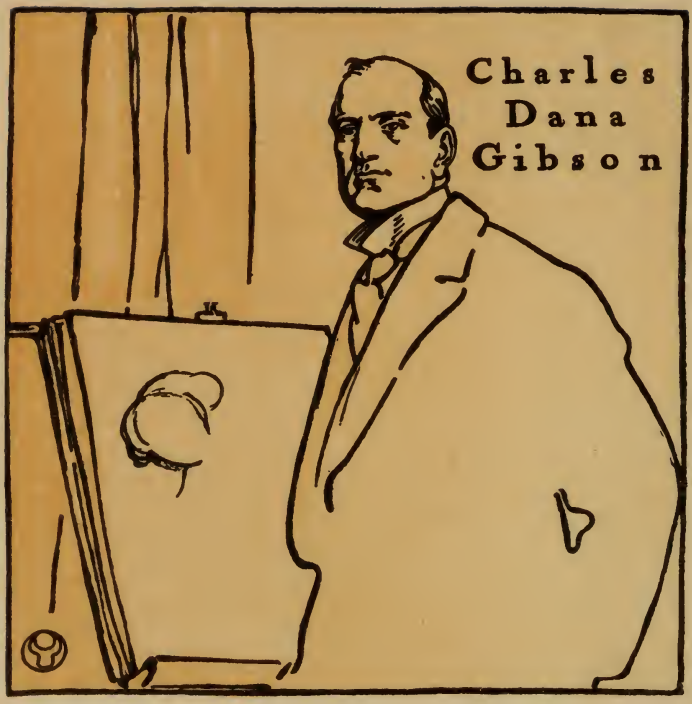
Charles
Dana
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Charles Dana Gibson

The Man and His Art

With a Brief but Entertaining Narrative of Two Gibson Girls

New York
Collier's Weekly
MCMIII

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Charles Dana Gibson

The Man and His Art

THOUGH Charles Dana Gibson has been famous and successful for a dozen years, and is still a young man, it is not to be supposed that he escaped the usual course in the School of Hard Knocks which falls to most men who are worth their salt in the artistic profession. The important facts in his career may be briefly stated, as they were taken from the artist's lips by the writer of this article.

The first of American draughtsmen was born near Boston, at Roxbury, Mass., in 1867. His family is of good American stock, the male members having generally combined physical strength with marked intel-

A GIBSON GIRL

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lectual traits. Gibson himself, standing over six feet and of powerful frame, is a typical specimen of his race. "I often feel," he said with a smile, "that it is absurd for a big fellow like me to play at work with a little pencil."

Mr. Gibson's father settled at Flush-

ing, Long Island, when the future artist was but three weeks old, and so he grew up to all intents and purposes a New York boy. Mr. Gibson whimsically denies that he was ever what is called a "youthful prodigy," or that at an early age he displayed a remarkable precocity for art. "At any rate," he said to the present writer, "I have never seen any barn-doors decorated with my colored crayons, and if I made sketches in those days, my parents probably destroyed them out of regard for my feelings in years to come. But I did begin to make pictures, or attempts at pictures, when I was still a boy, and when I was seventeen I joined the classes of the Art Students' League. Such is the confidence of youth, that by the time I was nineteen I thought I 'knew it all'—perhaps a little more—and so I took a studio here in New York and began to turn out drawings."

Art is proverbially a stern mistress. Many a man has served a harder apprenticeship than did Gibson, but his probation was sufficiently trying, as has been hinted already, and he proved by frequent reverses the old, old truth that there is no royal road to success. Two years of study with the New York Students' League and a brief course later at Julien's atelier in Paris—that was the sum of Gibson's artistic education so far as it was picked up in the professional schools.

But life was teaching the ambitious young artist as no drawing-master, no copying from models, could teach him. He was learning with eager eyes, in the thick of the hustling crowds, the varied scenes of New York. No doubt his early setbacks went to strengthen his equipment. His instructors in the technique of art had failed to identify him as a genius or in any way to remark his native

capacity. One surmises that he has not, in consequence, a very high opinion of the encouragement and inspiration to be derived from the conventional artistic training.

"When I got out of the art school," he says, "I could draw no better, to all appearances, than when I went in —at any rate, my work wasn't a bit more salable. But I made up a portfolio of all sorts of things I had done in the school—awfully bad no doubt the greater part of them were—and started out to see what I could do. I visited every publishing house, photo-engraving establishment and lithographer in the city of New York. They were all very polite; they even became pleasantly familiar with me, and some of them really wished to help me, but none of them wanted my work. I would take a bundle of drawings to a publishing house—not skipping the biggest places—and give

A GIBSON GIRL

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them to the boy without my name and address, saying I would call in a day or two. Sometimes I would go back for them—oftener I left the drawings altogether, in a desperate hope, I sup-

pose, that they might be used if I ceased worrying about them."

The first success came when "Life" accepted a drawing, and the art editor invited young Gibson to submit other specimens of his work. The story is told that the ardent young man at once offered a dozen drawings, which were not unkindly declined. There were rebuffs and disappointments still to be encountered, but the worst was passed and a market had been opened for him by that first picture in "Life." Within a year his pen-and-ink sketches were in general demand. "Scribner's" gave him a commission to illustrate "The Luck of the Bogans," a story by Sarah Orne Jewett; and almost immediately his distinctive style began to make itself felt. Next the "Century" recognized the young artist, and then "Harper's" took him up, very soon afterward making a contract with him by which he was to

draw for no other monthly publication during a year.

The hard time of probation was over for Gibson. His feet were at last planted in the paths of success. Publishers were now competing for his work. And he had not yet reached his twenty-fifth year.

Once upon a time, in the early heyday of the Gibson Girl's popularity, that keen critic, Mr. Israel Zangwill, wrote: "Mr. Gibson merits the pride with which his countrymen speak of him. He has created the 'American Girl,' and a charming creature she is, though modelled on an Irish girl, they will tell you in the Latin Quarter."

The Gibson Girl includes these seven distinct types: The Beauty; the Boy-girl; the Flirt; the Sentimental; the Convinced; the Ambitious; and the Well-balanced. The last-named is the artist's favorite, for it is she who comes nearest to the ideal of young

American womanhood. The Well-balanced Girl is all harmony, she is loved by many men, she refuses many offers of marriage and still retains the friendship of the man. She is a happy combination of the six other types of the Gibson Girl—beginning with the professional Beauty, who is tall, well-built, knows how to dress, is always on parade in full uniform, age eighteen to twenty. The next type, the Boy-girl, is a "good-fellow" sort, wears tailor-made frocks, smokes cigarettes, plays billiards, will help you out of a scrape as well as into one, talks with disconcerting audacity about anything she chooses, is a bit of a "sport," and enjoys more the excitement of nearly losing her life on a runaway horse than the attentions of a lovesick man. Gibson's Sentimental Girl is extremely romantic, fancies she loves a certain man until she meets another who perhaps wears better boots, makes each

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THE GREATEST GAME IN

Drawn by Cha

From Collier's Household Number for March. Issue of Februar

HE WORLD—HIS MOVE

Dana Gibson

3, 1903

man think she adores him until he takes her in earnest, when she suddenly discovers she loves him not. The Convinced Gibson Girl sets herself a certain course to pursue and follows it up without taking a single side-step. The Ambitious type has a well-defined object in life and is constantly at work trying to attain it by making her entire life subservient to it.

A famous English writer once wrote a whimsical essay to prove that instead of Art imitating Nature, as most people conceive the process, the reverse of this actually takes place. The writer pointed out how women generally assimilate any recognized artistic type of beauty, Nature thus conforming to the prescription of Art. The fallacy is ingenious enough, and the vogue of the Gibson Girl might be cited as confirmatory evidence. It seems to be generally admitted that Mr. Gibson's famous and beautiful

type has many sisters among the reigning beauties of the land. Whether Mr. Gibson has herein assisted Art to impose its rule upon Nature, according to the ingenious English writer, is a question which the present writer need not attempt to settle. The fact remains that we saw her first in the pictures of Gibson, and then we began to see her—or did we only fancy this?—in the circles of wealth and fashion.

It is an ill-kept secret among Mr. Gibson's friends that he is somewhat inclined to resent the predominance which the critics accord to the Gibson Girl in any consideration of his work. And yet, looking back over the artist's busy and brilliant career—he has not passed his thirty-fifth year—it must be recorded that his creation of this charming type, now universally identified as the Gibson Girl, was the chief factor in his first important success.

"MR. DOOLEY"

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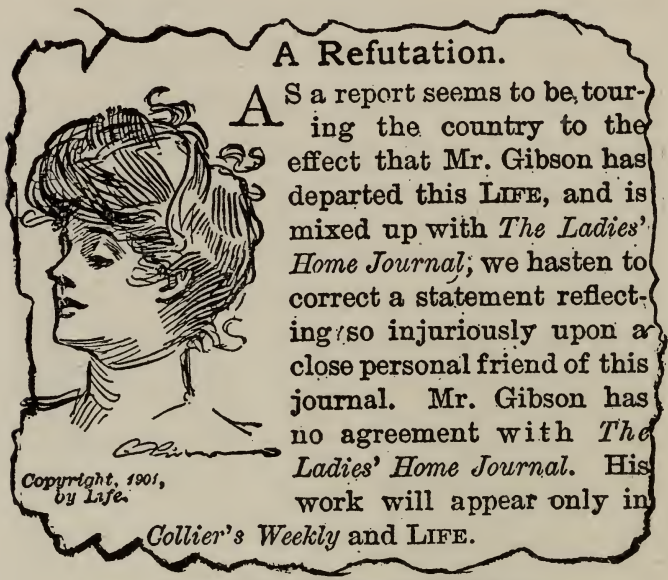
The Gibson Girl became the rage upon the publication in New York, in the fall of 1894, of the first collection of the artist's drawings. The book was received with unexampled favor by the public, and the critics acknowledged it to be of marked significance in the history of American art. The vogue of the Gibson Girl has continued to the present hour,

when her creator is, to say the truth, a little tired of it, and would like to be considered for another kind of artistic performance.

For it is upon his cartoon work, his portrayals of the many and varying aspects of American life and manners, that Mr. Gibson's fame and success as an artist really rest. No other illustrator seems to have so fully the power of making his picture tell a story without words; and whether rollicking in delicious humor or pointing a moral with earnest purpose his every drawing commands and holds attention.

It may be safely said that Mr. Gibson's work, in this capacity to tell its own story, surpasses the work of the late George Du Maurier. Mr. Du Maurier relied to a great extent upon the witty text by which his drawings were accompanied. The Gibson cartoon really needs no words, although in conventional form a title is affixed

to his pictures as they appear. And every day his work becomes surer and truer, as is witnessed by the double-page drawing from COLLIER'S Household Number for March, which is here given.


A Refutation.
AS a report seems to be touring the country to the effect that Mr. Gibson has departed this LIFE, and is mixed up with *The Ladies' Home Journal*, we hasten to correct a statement reflecting so injuriously upon a close personal friend of this journal. Mr. Gibson has no agreement with *The Ladies' Home Journal*. His work will appear only in *Collier's Weekly* and LIFE.
Copyright, 1901, by Life.

From "Life," February 12, 1903

The Story of Two "Gibson Girls"

From "Collier's Weekly," February 21, 1903

"*Look here, upon this picture, and on this.*"—Hamlet

BEHIND the smiling face on this week's cover lurks a story. It is mainly a comic story—with a suspicion of tragic interest impending. Perhaps our readers will bear with us while we tell the tale.

Many, many months ago the editor of this paper, impatient that its roster of famous contributors—celebrated writers and artists of first renown—should lack even one name of completeness, that of America's premier draughtsman and cartoonist, wrote to Mr. Charles Dana Gibson and offered him for twelve double-page drawings, to be published in the Household Numbers of COLLIER'S WEEKLY, the sum of ten thousand dollars. Mr. Gibson's reply was courteous, but

From "Collier's Weekly" of February 7, 1903

P. F Collier and Son

Dear Sir

I hereby accept your offer of $100.000. for 100 "double Page Cartoons" to be delivered to you during the next four years. And I agree to draw only for "Collier's Weekly" and "Life"

Truly yours

C. D. Gibson

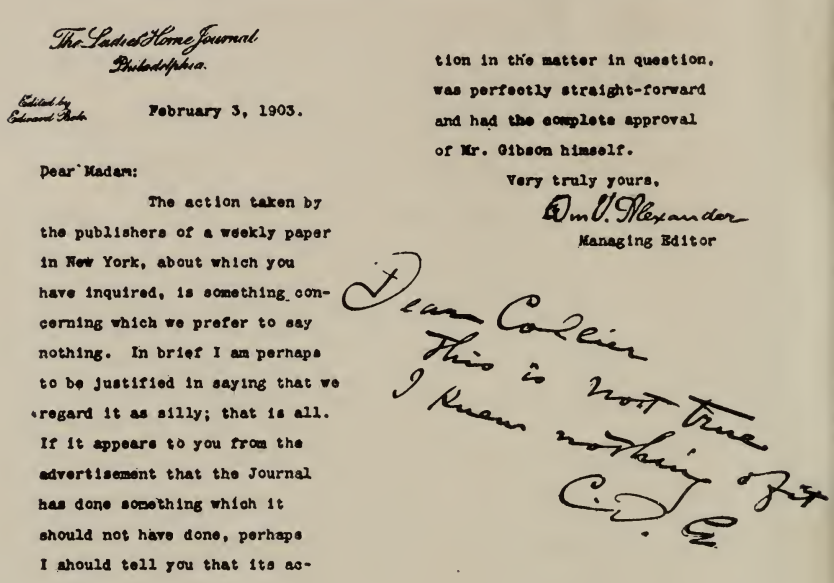
Oct 27 1902

To Remove All Misapprehension

The Ladies' Home Journal, in printing on its front cover for February a small sketch by Charles Dana Gibson (not originally drawn for that periodical, but an advertisement, arranged for by the publisher of his annual book), makes the misleading comment that "the original of the drawing sold in New York City for $80." As we have recently concluded a $100,000 contract with Mr. Gibson, it seems proper to correct the impression that the RIGHT TO REPRODUCE his original drawings may be had for any such sum as $80; and, in justice to Mr. Gibson and to the two periodicals which control his work (LIFE and COLLIER'S WEEKLY), we print, with his consent, the above contract, which shows the price paid for his original drawings AT FIRST HAND.

The above also appeared as an advertisement in daily papers Jan. 31–Feb. 5, 1903

firm. For years he had drawn exclusively for "Life"—this new proposition was flattering, the temptation, however, inadequate. "Double it, then," wrote the editor. "Yes," replied Mr. Gibson, "if you make it twenty-five thousand and for four years." "Done," said the editor. And so, on October 23d, was the contract signed. Early in a November number we had the pleasure of printing a brief review of Mr. Gibson's work, together with the announcement that he would be hereafter a regular contributor to COLLIER'S WEEKLY.



The Ladies' Home Journal
Philadelphia.

Edited by Edward Bok

February 3, 1903.

Dear Madam:

The action taken by the publishers of a weekly paper in New York, about which you have inquired, is something concerning which we prefer to say nothing. In brief I am perhaps to be justified in saying that we regard it as silly; that is all. If it appears to you from the advertisement that the Journal has done something which it should not have done, perhaps I should tell you that its action in the matter in question, was perfectly straight-forward and had the complete approval of Mr. Gibson himself.

Very truly yours,

Wm. V. Alexander

Managing Editor

Dear Colleen
This is not true
I know nothing of it
C. D. G.

"Charity that Covers"

Among the first ideas evolved by Mr. Gibson and the editor was one which particularly appealed to both —that of printing very simply as a cover a single head. So confident were we that this would prove at once attractive and unique that we committed the indiscretion of announcing it in a booklet—"The

Lion's Mouth"—published in November, as follows: "His double-page illustrations will be the artistic feature of the Household Number, and a striking departure from his usual form of expression will be a cover design for one of the special issues."

Now mark Fate's finger? Among the periodicals and magazines heaped on the editor's desk one morning was one whose blood-red cover caught his eye at once. He could hardly believe his eyes—for there, flagrant, albeit in unfamiliar surroundings, was the "Gibson Girl." It seemed impossible. But the clew to the mystery was soon forthcoming. Huddled, as if ashamed, at the foot of the picture, was a line of type (the price, as it were, on the poor girl's head) advertising "The Social Ladder," a book from which the sketch had been reprinted, and on the editorial announcement page the

statement that "the original of the drawing sold in New York City for $80."

It was to correct this disingenuous and misleading statement that we made public the terms of our contract with Mr. Gibson. Now, however, unchastened by adversity, the same magazine replies to the shocked inquiry of one of its subscribers with the statement that its unusual proceeding had "the complete approval of Mr. Gibson himself." On sending the letter to that distinguished artist it was returned with the vigorous indorsement shown herewith. So ends a picturesque, amusing and instructive incident.

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